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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 1, 2006

To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners

From: William C. Scalzo, Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "WCS", is written over the printed name of the director.

Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the January 10, 2006 Director's Summary.

Land Issues

We have become aware of two specific land issues which impact our system. The first is Oasis Park. The Commission approved of its disposal to the Mesa Association for Retarded Citizens two years ago. The group has asked for a few changes to the land use, and County Counsel believes that along with The Department of Community Development these technical adjustments can be made with the Board's approval.

Second we have received a request from Pinal County to dispose of a portion of the south finger of the San Tan Mountain Park for a road expansion. We have asked Pinal to present this matter to the Commission for their review, and recommended disposition.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

The department continues to have staff leave as we also try to recruit several vacant positions. Recent employees who have left are: Terry McLemore, Park Maintenance Worker, at McDowell; Cynthia Schofield, Grant Coordinator, at Headquarters and Sherine Zaya, Marketing Coordinator, at Headquarters. Kevin Smith was hired on 01/16/06, as the new Interpretive Ranger at the Spur Cross.

Positions we are currently recruiting for are: Regional Park Superintendent (East Valley); Assistant Director (Headquarters); Administrative Coordinator II (Headquarters); Contact Station Assistant (2 temp positions) at Lake Pleasant

Interviews are being conducted for the Grant Coordinator position at Headquarters and interviews will soon be conducted for the following positions: Park Supervisor position at Estrella; Administrative Coordinator at Headquarters and Trail Technician with the Trails Crew

Superintendent Report

Adobe Mountain Regional Park:

A request for a geocaching permit has been made for the Adobe Mountain Regional Park. This request is being reviewed and we are working with the requester to find an appropriate location for this cache.

Cave Creek Regional Park:

We are in the full swing of the season. An increase in park visitation and revenue has been experienced due to the Barrett-Jackson Auction and other local events/festivals. During the last two

weekends of January (and expected through March) the family campground has been completely full on the weekends and campers are taking advantage of "Overflow" taking their turn waiting for an open campsite.

Increased public contact with extended operations hours of the park entrance station is showing an increase in annual pass applications, park revenue and attendance.

Park Supervisors Johnathan Blyler and John Gunn are working with the Desert Foothills Natural Resource Initiative, a new citizen driven group looking at open space issues in northern Maricopa County. Among the participants of this initiative and in attendance at the initial meeting (1/20/06) were the Forest Service, Town of Carefree, Town of Cave Creek, City of Phoenix, Desert Foothills Land Trust and Black Mountain Conservancy.

Park Supervisors Johnathan Blyler and John Gunn plus the staff of Cave Creek Regional Park (CCRP) and Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA) collaborated on a tour of Spur Cross for the Volunteer Hosts of Cave Creek Regional Park. This Host Training was designed as both a special reward for our volunteers and to help them better understand our sister park. The information shared will enable CCRP to provide increased service to park visitors and residents of Cave Creek with questions about SCRCA.

Desert Outdoor Center:

The solar thermal HVAC approved by the Board of Supervisors on 4 January has panels en route to the DOC for installation in February-March. Dedication with dignitaries is planned for April 18, and open house for the public on April 22. A special telescope with an H-Alpha filter for viewing the surface of the sun will be present at both events.

The Aquatics Education Program will have the addition of a permanent dock located in Honeymoon Cove. Money was received from Arizona State Parks SLIF Fund in September. The bid solicitation to purchase the material was issued in early January and the vendor will be selected in early February. We expect the material to be delivered by early March and assembled by the end of March. It will be ready for our first clients of Boy Scouts, who will use the facility to obtain Merit Badges and other awards of accomplishment in June and July. In 2005, 232 Scouts participated in a four-week program in June.

The ethno botany garden has been completed with the installation of stepping stones and crushed rocks placed around the plants. This garden was funded by a grant from Central Arizona Project. About 60 plants and an agricultural section interpret the plants native Arizonans used for food, fiber and medicine. The garden has water supplied with an irrigation system and a protective fence of split-rail.

Archaeology and dinosaur bone dig sites are being developed on the west side of the main building near the Project Sol display. The Seven Crew has dug the two pits, and the substrate for the arch pit will be installed by the end of January. Materials to create the partial dinosaur skeleton are being assembled. Target date for these pits is scheduled for the end of March (arch pit) and May (dino pit).

Signage for the DOC will be enhanced with funding from APS, and includes signs for the ethno botany garden, Project Sol, the new Solar Thermal HVAC system, the Native American ball court at the front entrance, the archaeology and dino bone dig sites, and the exhibit hall. Sign text and graphics are being developed for this project will be forwarded to designers and the sign manufacturer by the end of February. Installation will be in March.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park:

ADEQ has been granted permission to place a mobile monitoring station at Lake Pleasant to help gather mercury data. Due to relatively high concentrations of methyl-mercury in fish tissue, several lakes in Arizona have been issued fish advisories. The monitoring system will be placed in February and will be in place for three weeks. No fish advisories have been issued at Lake Pleasant.

The Nests Watchers will be arriving on February 10. Lake Pleasant has been recognized as the #1 breeding area in Arizona. This Agua Fria closure has ensured the successful fledges of 18 babies since 1993.

An effort by the Bradshaw Coalition in educating off highway vehicle (OHV's) riders is continuing. The coalition has received grant funding to obtain signs and Kiosks to provide further information. The signs will be posted on Bureau of Land Management, Lake Pleasant Park boundaries as well as private land. Two kiosks will be placed on

park land to inform the riders of necessary information and one will be placed on BLM land. The signs and kiosks are scheduled to be installed on March 4, 2006

The 3rd annual Boat Safety Celebration event coordination is underway. The following organizations developed a Partnership in 2002 to provide educational opportunities to the public for boating safety and drowning prevention: Maricopa County Parks and Recreation, Arizona Game & Fish Department, Phoenix Sail and Power Squadron U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary, United States Power Squadron.

Grant funding has been awarded to produce the Lake Pleasant Brochure along with a Pocket Guide that focuses on Fishing and Boating Safety information. The layout has been completed and will go to print next month.

A grant has been submitted to AZ Game and Fish for a Web-Cam to be placed on the roof of Lake Pleasant Headquarters. This equipment will give the public an opportunity to check out the weather as well as the traffic conditions at the 10-lane boat ramp from their homes etc. An additional grant was submitted to replace dive gear for the Navigational Crew.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park:

McDowell Mountain Regional Park's Family Campground had a five percent increase in camping days during December 2005 over December 2004. On January 28th, McDowell Mountain Regional Park hosted the first race in the Mountain Bike Association of Arizona's State Championship series. McDowell hosted the seventh annual Pemberton 50K race on Saturday February 4th and on February 12th RPM Cycling will hold it's sixth annual race in the park. The weekend of January 21st and 22nd were the busiest non-event weekend in recent years at McDowell and generated record

The 7-Crew had to create a new leech field at restroom #3 to replace the old one which had been overtaken by tree roots. The ramadas at the Trailhead Staging Area had all the seams in the roofs sealed anticipating that eventually rain will return to central Arizona. The flood lights at those ramadas were replaced by the 7 -Crew the last week of January.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA):

Park Supervisor, John Gunn coordinated with NAU to host a meeting of the Governors Council on Forest Health at Cave Creek Town hall. The group was provided a PowerPoint presentation and a tour of the burn site on the CCRA and our progressive approach in dealing with fire in our parks.

John Gunn prepared an RFQ and has supervised the near completion of the subsequent contract; a floral restoration project along the existing 2 miles of jeep trails in Spur Cross. More than twenty species of native grasses, wildflowers and shrubs comprised the hydro-seeding treatment at \$4000/acre. This project will be monitored in cooperation with the Universities. We anticipate a great deal of insight and external educational opportunities will spring forth from these efforts, provided it ever rains!

John Gunn is working on a proposal for us and hopefully others, to attempt to eradicate a new invasive noxious weed, Star Thistle, which has unfortunately become established in Spur Cross and elsewhere in the Cave Creek-Carefree area. The spread of Star Thistle is facilitated by such vehicles as horses, and vehicles, hence most initial invasions start at the edges of roads and trails. These thistles also known as knapweeds are also reported to be toxic to equines. Parts of the efforts are to develop a PowerPoint presentation on this and other noxious weeds for staff training.

Maricopa Trail

The Bureau of Land Management, Chris Horyza, has completed the publication of their Aqua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw-Harquahala Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement by the Phoenix District which includes the Black Canyon Trail commingled with the Maricopa Trail between Lake Pleasant and I-17.

At Anthem, Colin Phipps, has completed the construction staking for Segment 15 of the Trail on Anthem from I-17 to Skunk Creek and hired their consultant to design the 2.5+ acre Trailhead that will be located north of Desert Hills Drive, east of Skunk Creek and west of the Anthem fire station.

Maricopa County Real Estate Services, Tony Chavez, has completed the recording of the right of way purchase from the Arizona State Land Department of Segment 10 at White tank Mountain Regional Park connecting to McMicken Dam.

The Flood Control Department has commenced the Metro Phoenix Area Drainage Master Plan which includes the Maricopa Trail/Sun Circle Trail Segment 2.

The City of Peoria, Jeff Sargent, has coordinated the efforts of the Tierra del Rio development on the east bank of the Aqua Fria, north of Happy Valley Parkway, to include the regional trail system alignment with separate asphalt surface treads for equestrian and hiking use.

The Flood Control District, Dennis Holcomb, has started the intergovernmental agreement review process with Parks and has established the goal of completing the draft IGA by February 1, 2006.

The Arizona Department of Transportation, Cheryl Banta, has agreed to expand their scope of work on the Guadalupe bridge project, to include the Sun Circle/Maricopa Trail alignment, east to the Highline Canal/City of Tempe border, and west to the City of Phoenix South Mountain Park.

With Parks support, Supervisor Kunasek is coordinating potential partnering opportunities with the Desert Hills Community Association/Ann Hutchinson to supplement the trail alignment through Anthem, including the Daisy Mountain API area.

New Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation board member, Karrin Taylor, has received a briefing on the Regional Trail System Plan Annual Report-November 2005 and an overview of the upcoming 2006 design and construction activities.

Marketing Update

The Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Report was distributed to several individuals, within and outside of, Maricopa County government. We hope this tool will not only enlighten our partners in how we do business, but also work as a historical reference.

The design for the mural in Change of Venue has been finalized, and we anticipate the work to be implemented in February. This advertising space will help increase the knowledge of Maricopa County employees, as well as visitors to the building, on what recreational opportunities are available to them at their local Maricopa County park.

The postcard mailers were sent to print. Each park will receive 5,000 mailers, with at \$1 coupon on the back, in an effort to broaden awareness of the parks. The funding for this project is half paid for by the Arizona Office of Tourism.

The Estrella Trails and McDowell Park brochures are off to the printers. We anticipate they will be available to the parks by early February.

As of this writing our Marketing Coordinator, Sherine Zaya, is leaving us. Sherine has asked me to let the Commission know that she enjoyed working with each of you.

Contract Updates

Negotiations continue regarding settlement with Kenny Enterprises (Waterworld).

Pending legal action continues regarding the recent award of the new marina agreement.

The Board of Supervisors approved the Agreement with S.O.L.I.D. USA to allow Parks to have installed, at no purchase cost to us, a Solar HVAC System at the Desert Outdoor Center (DOC). Through a tri-party arrangement (S.O.L.I.D. USA, APS and Parks), the DOC will be a "showcase" for Arizona in the use of solar energy and will enhance the mission of the DOC.

The Board of Supervisors approved the agreement with Tonto National Forest to support joint trail maintenance between Utey Mountain Regional Park and Tonto National Forest. They also approved the agreement with Northern Arizona University for a fire recovery study at Spur Cross Ranch.

Construction/Design Projects

Buckeye Hills Regional Park Public Shooting Range:

Arrington Watkins Architects, LLC, is 99% complete with the construction documents. The next step will be to apply for a construction grant from the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The project will include: a multiuse outdoor public shooting range for pistol and rifle, two training ranges, and a range office with a large classroom, retail area and public restrooms. Maricopa County Facilities Management Department has not moved forward with the electrical and water infrastructure of the park.

Buckeye Hills Regional Park Master Plan:

The preplanning has begun and consultant selection process will start in the spring of 2006 in order for the consultant to begin work at the start of the new fiscal year. A scoping meeting with the park supervisors and west side trail planner was conducted before a Request for a Letter of Interest was sent to consultants, which is due February 27, 2006.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park Irrigation System Improvements

J2 Engineering and Environmental Design were selected to provide irrigation system design, construction documents, and construction administration. The consultant is in the data collection phase and has submitted plans showing existing conditions. Construction is planned to begin in May.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park - SRP 69kV & 12kV Projects:

Salt River Project (SRP) is 100% complete with the 69kV Project. The construction for the 12kV is also 100% complete. The 12kV line will supply power to the entry station and the future competitive track restroom. SRP will complete the hydro seeding along the 69kV alignment in February 2006.

Restroom Improvements 2005:

Niche Contractors Inc. is the general contractor for The Restroom, Ramada and Entry Station Improvement Project. The scope of work covers: Estrella ramada and picnic restroom, White Tank with two group picnic restrooms, McDowell entry station and campground restroom, and Usery family campground restroom. For White Tanks and Estrella, the walls are being erected and the concrete floor slab has been poured. The excavation, footers, and rough plumbing and electrical is beginning at McDowell and Usery.

Entry Station Improvements 2006:

Architectural Resource Team was selected to provide site adaptation plans and construction administration for the Estrella entry station and monument sign, White Tank entry station, monument sign, and group picnic restroom, Cave Creek entry station, McDowell campground restroom and monument sign, and Usery entry station and monument sign. The consultant is preparing site adaptation plans and septic system designs, and construction is planned to start in May.

Usery Mountain Regional Park Water System Improvements

HDR Engineering was selected to provide water system engineering and construction administration. At the same time, coordination with the City of Mesa is taking place in order to obtain water service from them. The request will go before the City of Mesa Utilities Committee on February 6, 2006.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park RV Dump Station Construction

Ritoch-Powell Associates was selected to provide construction administration for the RV dump station. The bid opening was unsuccessful due to one bidder submitting a bid that exceeded the engineer's estimate. Staff has decided to re-bid the project because the holidays had a negative impact on the bid process. The new bid opening date is February 28, 2006.

Visitor Centers

Staff is conducting field visits to various visitor centers around the valley in order to prepare the spatial planning and scope of work. Staff made a site visit to the Rock Art Museum, and the next site visit is to the City of Phoenix, North Mountain Visitor Center. Also, engineering staff has met with the park supervisors of Cave Creek, McDowell, White

Tank, Usery, and Estrella Regional Parks to discuss the optimum sites based on infrastructure, accessibility, and views for the visitor centers and amphitheaters. The preplanning has begun and consultant selection process will start in the spring of 2006 in order for the consultant to begin work at the start of the new fiscal year. McDowell, Cave Creek, Usery, White Tank, and Estrella will be recipients of new visitor centers and amphitheaters. Estrella will be the only park not receiving a new amphitheater because of their existing facility; however, Lake Pleasant will be receiving an amphitheater. A Request for a Letter of Interest has been sent to consultants and is due on February 27, 2006.

On the Move, Part II (Parks relocation to 234 N. Central, Suite 6400)

The move was successful with only a couple of hiccups such as no water to the Security Building on Saturday, January 28th, when the move was going at full force.